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For 26 de Julio: Sanctions

Fidel Castro thought that yesterday would be *his* day. It was the anniversary of his attack on Batista's Moncada Barracks. And for the occasion he distributed bread, mounted a circus and invited the outside world, including a group of American reporters, to come see it.

But yesterday may go down in history for another, no less important, event. If the 26 de Julio of 1953 marked the start of Castro's rise to power, the 26 de Julio of 1964, when the Organization of American States declared Castro to be an aggressor and invoked sanctions under the hemisphere defense treaty, may mark the day when his fate was sealed.

The Cuban dictator, noted for his sixth sense, anticipated the critical character of the OAS meeting. And before the American Foreign Ministers had even assembled in Washington, he and his brother, Raul, made a cunning offer of peace. They proposed to halt their subversive activities (thereby, incidentally, indirectly admitting they had been engaging in them), to compensate American companies for their confiscated properties, to restore trade relations, to release their political prisoners and perhaps even to call elections.

The aim was obvious: to encourage at least seven Latin American republics to believe that a peaceful settlement could still be reached with Castro, at the eleventh hour. Seven would be sufficient to block the two-

thirds majority required to vote sanctions against Castro's armed attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuela.

But when the vote was taken, only four came to his defense; Chile because its anti-Communist government feared to provoke the extreme Left on the eve of Presidential elections; Uruguay and Bolivia because their governments, too, fear the leftist backlash and Mexico because its anti-Yanqui sentiment is still so deep-seated that it prefers to permit intervention by Cuban communism in the internal affairs of a Latin republic than intervention by the United States, even jointly with other American republics.

Argentina and Brazil, two of the largest and most important republics, turned against Castro and provided more than the 13 votes required to carry the resolution. The result was better than anticipated by its sponsors and much worse than expected by Castro.

But the significance of the resolution is what counts. It means that the great majority of American republics refuse to accept Castro's offer to become a Caribbean Tito. They can't accept it because they can't rely on his word, even when he promises to become an "independent" Communist.

They prefer, instead, to cut off and to wait—to wait until it is free of Castro.